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Book and Music Review

Conducted by K. W. GEHRKINS, Oberlin College

"Philharmonic Orchestra Series." Oliver Ditson Co.

The appearance of two new numbers in Ditson's *Philharmonic Series* serves to call attention once more to this excellent group of arrangements for school orchestras. Until the publication of these numbers, the directors of school orchestras virtually had to make a choice between two kinds of material, both of which were objectionable: (1) Easy arrangements of marches, waltzes, polkas, etc. said to be especially prepared for school use, but consisting of such poor music, that there was no inspiration for either conductor or pupils in using them; (2) theatre orchestra music, much of it of excellent quality, but almost none of it adapted to the needs of instrumental ensemble groups in schools. Then came the Ditson arrangements prepared by Mr. Coerne, and now for the first time there is available good music of easy grade, carefully arranged for a specific use, namely, the public school orchestra.

The points that especially strike one in going through the series are as follows: (1) the orchestration is such that the effect is full and sonorous without undue difficulty of parts; (2) the second violin and other parts, so often extremely uninteresting, have been enriched to such an extent that each part in the arrangement is really melodic and interesting throughout a comparatively large portion of the entire composition; (3) the bowing of the stringed instruments has been arranged for immature players in such a way that their maximum powers of performance are utilized without too much scrambling on their part; (4) the notation is complete and correct

instead of incomplete and incorrect as in the case of so much orchestra music; (5) the cueing is particularly skilful, making it much easier for the winds to come in after a rest; (6) the clarinet parts are almost exclusively for the B flat instrument, thus catering to the player who has only one clarinet; (7) the numbers are graded from I to V so that one can tell before purchasing a number about how difficult it is likely to be for a particular orchestra; (8) the numbers are particularly well chosen from the standpoint of getting music that is simple and playable without being hackneyed, as is the case in so many collections.

Best of all there is furnished for each number a full score for the conductor, and what a joy it is for the experienced director to have all the parts before him as he conducts. And what fun the novice will have in learning to follow a full score!

"Music Supervisors' National Conference, Journal of Proceedings," 1921. (St. Joseph Meeting.)

Many of the former volumes published by the Conference, like *Topsy*, have "just growed," no one having been particularly responsible for their contents or their arrangement; but in the last few years our books have shown more and more evidence of the guiding hand of an editor, and both the appearance and the arrangement of our volumes have been improving steadily from year to year. Putting a book of this size together for the printer, and seeing to it that everything is in the proper place, that the spelling, punctuation, etc., are reasonably correct; that the printer does not make people say things that they did